DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 736 FL 022 636

AUTHOR	Diaz, Ricardo; And Others
TITLE	Working Papers in Educational Linguistics. Volume 10, Number 2.
INSTITUTION	Pennsylvania Univ., Philadelphia. Graduate School of Education.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	35p.; For individual papers, see FL 022 637-639.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
JOURNAL CIT	Working Papers in Educational Linguistics; v10 n2 Fall 1994
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Classroom Communication; Discourse Analysis; English (Second Language); *Error Correction; Graduate Students; Higher Education; *Intercultural Communication; *Interpersonal Communication; Japanese; Language Research; Linguistics; Research Methodology; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Speech Acts; Tutoring; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS	*University of Pennsylvania

ABSTRACT

Three papers written by graduate students on educational linguistics are included. These papers represent works in progress by students and professors on topics ranging from speech act analysis and classroom discourse to language planning and second language acquisition. The papers are generally based on research carried out for courses offered in the Language in Education Division of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. The papers are intended to be a forum for the exchange of ideas among scholars in the field of educational linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania and at universities with similar programs in educational and applied linguistics around the world. Papers in this volume include the following: "From Interpersonal to Classroom Discourse: Developing Research Methods" (Elite Olshtain); "Error Treatment in a Japanese Language Classroom" (Aiko Inoue and Mitsuo Kubota); "Cross-cultural Communication in the Writing Center and in the Tutoring Session: A Process of Sensitization" (Michell Y. Szpara). Contains 14 references. (CK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 376 736

WPEL

WORKING PAPERS IN EDUCATIONAL LINGUISTICS

Volume 10, Number 2 / Fall, 1994

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. Donnelly
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL022636

University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Working Papers in Educational Linguistics

Editors:
Ricardo Díaz, Mitchell A. Furumoto,
Holly A. Monheimer, and Leslie K. Nabors

Language in Education Division
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania

Division Faculty

Teresa Pica, Chair
Morton Botel
Vivian Gadsden
Nancy Hornberger
Susan Lytle
Rebecca Freeman
Cheri Micheau

Programs

Educational Linguistics
TESOL
Intercultural Communication
Reading/Writing/Literacy

Volume 10, Number 2 / Fall, 1994

STUDY
LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION
AT PENN

EDUCATIONAL LINGUISTICS
TESOL
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
READING / WRITING / LITERACY

COURSES INCLUDE:

Educational Linguistics/Sociolinguistics/Second Language Acquisition/Teaching Reading to Second Language Learners/Language Diversity and Education/Classroom Discourse and Interaction/Social and Historical Perspectives on Literacy/Multicultural Issues in Education/Forming and Reforming the Reading and Language Arts Curriculum/TESOL Methodology/Language Planning and Language Policy/Structure of English

M.S. Ed., Ed.D., Ph.D.
Full and part-time
Scholarships and Fellowships

For detailed information, clip and mail to: Admissions Office, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, 3700 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Please send information about _____

December, 1994

From the Editors:

The purpose of *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics (WPEL)* is to present works in progress by students and professors on topics ranging from speech act analysis and classroom discourse to language planning and second language acquisition. Papers in *WPEL* are generally based on research carried out for courses offered in the Language in Education Division of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

It is our intention that *WPEL* will continue to be a forum for the exchange of ideas among scholars in the field of educational linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania and at universities with similar programs in educational and applied linguistics around the world. *WPEL* is sent to nearly one hundred universities worldwide.

We hope that you will find this issue both useful and stimulating.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals whose help and cooperation made this publication possible: Acting Dean Nancy Hornberger, Keith Watanabe, Frank Kodman, Lorraine Hightower, William Brickman, and Byung Choi.

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Working Papers in Educational Linguistics
Language in Education Division, GSE
University of Pennsylvania
3700 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216

Contents

From interpersonal to classroom discourse: Developing research methods

Elite Olshtain 1

Error treatment in a Japanese language classroom

Aiko Inoue and Mitsuo Kubota 9

Cross-cultural communication in the Writing Center and in the tutoring session: A process of sensitization

Michelle Y. Szpara 21

From interpersonal to classroom discourse: Developing research methods

Elite Olshtain

Professor of Education, Tel Aviv University
Professor of Education, Hebrew University

This is the text of a talk presented at the 1994 Nessa Wolfson Memorial Colloquium at the University of Pennsylvania.

Thank you for inviting me to come here today. I am both honored and grateful to be able to speak at the Nessa Wolfson Colloquium. Nessa was a very dear friend of mine, and in many ways she was my mentor. I feel very fortunate to have known her, worked with her, and learned from her. As a researcher, she knew how to add the human touch to her work, and this is something I greatly appreciated in her studies. I think we can learn a lot from her example.

Now to begin with today, I want to look at these three subjects: miscommunication in speech acts, speech act research, and applications in the classroom. To start, speech acts must be viewed within the larger framework of communicative competence. The model we are familiar with is the one put forth by Canale and Swain (1980), but today I want to refer to a new one proposed by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell, which will be published this year (see Figure). The distinguishing feature of this model is that the pivotal center is discourse competence, and everything else revolves around this. Discourse competence interacts with the three subfields of sociolinguistic competence, linguistic competence, and actional competence. In their work on this subject, Celce-Murcia *et al* concentrate on actional competence in speech act behavior in order to emphasize how one translates one's ideas into actions in the community. It is also crucial to note that in the background of the model, affecting all of these areas, is what Canale and Swain call strategic competence, but in this model, it is really the individual ability that compensates for what might be insufficient in any of the other areas. In other words, these are strategies to compensate for what the learner does not know.

As language teachers, we are aware of the need to do research in this area. But when we talk of "interlanguage," remember that it is not present only in L2 learning; it is

any distinction between languages. In fact, bilinguals might have this distinction in both languages, and the first language learner also has it. The following are some research questions relating to interlanguage features:

1. To what extent has the learner acquired the linguistic repertoire needed to realize the particular speech act?

2. To what extent is the learner's speech-act behavior similar to or different from a native speaker's behavior under the same circumstances? Does this difference affect the learner's ability to act properly?

3. What compensation strategies does the learner use when his or her language is inadequate?

4. What is the learner's selection route and decision-making process with respect to strategy preference, content limitation, illocutionary intent, etc.

Looking at the model presented in the figure and also the research questions presented above, we can see that the model and the research framework come together. All of this can be summed up as asking: what is the learner's awareness of making choices? Some learners are not aware that there are problems and decisions to be made. We would like to know the learner's decision-making process because as teachers and researchers, we can design better ways to make the learner responsible for part of the learning. How can we share this burden with our students? Today we feel that language learning success depends heavily on the learner's own evaluation of this process.

Figure: Components of Communicative Competence (adapted from Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell, pre-publication copy)

Speech Acts and the Second Language Learner: What Can Go Wrong?

First, let's determine what factors influence success in interpersonal communication. We have three major areas to consider here: mutual shared knowledge, specific situational factors, and personal perceptions. Shared knowledge can be anything, including content (such as this talk on sociolinguistics), experience, social conventions, cultural expectations, and value systems; specific situational factors are the participants and the circumstances; and personal perceptions are the individual differences: the intentions, the expectations, and the interpretation of the events.

This last category is especially interesting because we know that with these individual differences, communication can go wrong even within the same culture. One illustration of this miscommunication is illustrated in the following dialogue in which two native speakers of English in a department of an American university have a mismatch of individual intentions and even different shared knowledge:

Woman: Excuse me, where can I make some xerox copies?

Clerk: For?

Woman: (silence)

Clerk: Are you an instructor?

Woman: No, a student.

Clerk: We can only make xerox copies for instructors.

Woman: Well, I. . .OK. But where can I find a xerox machine (original intention)?

Clerk: Oh, I see. Up the stairs, past the bookstore.

In this speech act, the clerk clearly mistakes an information question for a request for xeroxing. Since the two participants are both native speakers, they can quickly make corrections, and there is no big tragedy. They know both the language and the culture. We get this sort of cultural information very early on in our first language, as studies of nursery children have shown (Grimshaw, 1990).

As teachers and researchers, we know that things can go wrong at any point in the speech act when we are dealing with nonnative speakers, and the situation is much more complicated when you don't know the culture. There may be an inappropriate formula realization on the part of the speaker, or an inappropriate reaction to what a speaker has

said. Sometimes we see situations in which the intermediate student, because of his higher proficiency level, can actually get into more trouble than the beginner student who must limit his participation to single words. I am reminded of a Chinese student who was studying English at the intermediate level in the United States. He had accidentally taken another student's umbrella, and when confronted with this fact, he issued a profuse apology and explanation when a simple "sorry" was entirely sufficient. A beginner student would have responded with the appropriate apology simply because that would be all he was capable of saying.

Intralinguistic and Intercultural Features: What Do We Want From Research?

Now that we have seen where miscommunication can occur, let's see what research can accomplish for the teacher. We will assume that communicative competence leads to successful communication, and we can define successful communication as the learners ability to react in a culturally acceptable way in a given context. As teachers, we want to know how to bring learners to this level, so we should address the following questions in our research: First, what are the universal features common to everyone? Second, what are the language-specific features?

In addressing these issues we need to look at both the pragmatic as well as the linguistic considerations of any particular speech act. Pragmatic considerations include the cultural norms, speaker-hearer relations, and the context of the act. We all might have ways of apologizing, for example, but what are the different ways in which we apologize? Apologies will vary in intensity, so that in some contexts, apologies are unnecessary, while in others they are required. If I step on someone's toe on a crowded bus, I might offer only a minimal apology, but if I miss an appointment, I definitely owe an apology to my acquaintance. Think of how often international students get into difficulty because they don't know how to measure the degree of offense of so many things that they do. Linguistic considerations include factors such as the available repertoire of the student, direct and indirect speech, and linguistic conventions. As an example of direct and indirect form in the speech act, we can imagine the need to make a request. I can say, "It's rather hot in here," or I can say "Open the window." The student needs to be aware of these differences in form because their use becomes conventionalized and make up the rules of appropriateness. As teachers, we need to find these rules through research before we can teach them to our students.

Research can help us in two areas. First, we need to know more about social factors, such as rules regarding social power, social distance, age, and sex. Keep in mind, however, that other factors might play a part in some cultures. Second, we need to know more about pragmatic factors, such as severity violations in making an apology. We can ask -- who apologizes? In what situations? Who never needs to apologize? In some cultures, for example, the military or the government never needs to apologize. We need to know how speech act behavior relates to these considerations.

The complexity of speech act realization patterns and of strategy selection as paired up with social and pragmatic features requires careful development of research instruments and data collection procedures. Researchers need to combine ethnographic and elicited data collection techniques in order to secure both reliability and efficiency in the process. I suggest a cycle of data collection that should ideally be followed by all researchers in this field:

1. Ethnographic data collection should enable us to form a general hypothesis about the speech act set, and about cultural preferences. The research disadvantage, however, is the fact that we can never be sure to cover the full range of social and pragmatic factors that we need in spite of the fact that we can collect large amounts of data. The important advantage is the authenticity of the data.

2. Role play activities provide an initial test of our hypothesis and enable us to focus on specific circumstantial and social features. Here we should go outside of the university setting and into other communities.

3. The Discourse Completion Test (DCT) has the very important advantage that it can be fully manipulated by the researcher to focus on selected variables. It can be administered to a large group of respondents, and it can be adjusted for gender, age, or any other variable. The instrument has another important value in that it can be used for cross-cultural or other cross-group comparisons. This is an excellent basis for establishing the basic strategies of the speech act set.

4. The Acceptability Test enables us to establish the range of acceptable versus non-acceptable forms of speech from the entire range of behavior collected from the DCT.

5. Self reporting on production on one of the elicitation tests has shown to be problematic, but this method can be extremely insightful when added to the use of a DCT. In this case, the participants would narrate why they made the choices they did on the DCT. To complete the cycle, we have the option of testing our results against new ethnographic data.

Conclusion: What Can We Teach in the Classroom?

There are some situations where the student misses all of the previously mentioned social and cultural factors. One primary danger comes from textbooks which present examples of dialogues for the learner to memorize. After accomplishing this task, the learner believes that this is how he should behave in the real world. It is very misleading to give a student a faulty instrument that he believes will always work.

What can both the learner and the teacher do to help their predicament? The student should become aware of social factors, pragmatic factors, and specific features of speech-act interaction. Every learner should be a little bit of a sociolinguist. From this point, they can develop their own compensation strategies.

Our stress should be on promoting awareness. We need to demonstrate that there is no bad intention involved in miscommunication. Teachers can put emphasis on the integration of social and pragmatic considerations in language teaching, but they should avoid making these examples into firm norms. Teachers can also adjust their expectations to interlanguage features of speech-act behavior. We know that we can teach the third-person singular "s" for four years, but the learner still might not acquire this form. Likewise, we need to realize that there are things our students will not do because they remain culture-bound to their native culture. When teaching new forms, instructors can also provide "safety rules" in order to give their students a few different ways out of a difficult situation. Examples of these teaching techniques might include the use of role-plays developed from student observations of their community outside of the university.

References

Canale, M. & M. Swain. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*. 1: 1-47.

Grimshaw, A.D. (Ed.) (1990). Conflict Talk: Sociolinguistic Investigations of Arguments in Conversations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Error Treatment in a Japanese language classroom

Aiko Inoue and Mitsuo Kubota

University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Education

The process of learning a language is a long and arduous one. The spoken word is only a part of communication, and socio-pragmatics is increasingly recognized as a key element in language learning. More and more Americans are becoming aware of the gap between grammatical proficiency and cultural fluency as they strive to do business in our global economy. This research project examines the educational practices employed to prepare business students at the University of Pennsylvania to operate effectively in the Japanese business world.

Recently the number of foreigners learning Japanese and working in Japan is increasing. In Japan, we have noticed that American business people often become successful due to their competence in Japanese. On the other hand, there are cases when American business people are not successful even though they speak grammatically perfect Japanese. We suspect, therefore, that there are other elements which influence the communication process. To better understand the factors which influence how Americans communicate in Japanese, we decided to look at a Japanese language classroom taught by a native Japanese teacher at the University of Pennsylvania. When looking at this classroom, we will focused on how the teacher conveyed social and cultural aspects of language to her students. Specifically, we concentrated on how the teacher handled sociolinguistic errors to assist students in strengthening their sociolinguistic competence.

Sociolinguistic competence is an important component of communicative competence (Holmes, 1978:134 and Paulston, 1974). Wolfson, however, suggests that there are some difficulties in acquiring sociolinguistic competence (Wolfson, 1989). Allwright (1975) points out that in a language classroom the teacher's role is to be a source of information about the target language and to react to errors whenever it seems appropriate. Therefore, we would like to examine the teacher's role in class, especially the effect of teacher feedback through error corrections.

Through an informal interview with the Japanese teachers in the "Language and Cultural Perspectives Program" at the Joseph H. Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, we learned that their language program is aimed at advanced learners who explore different topics in class, including Japanese business management and cultural content. For these reasons, it is crucial for them to be sensitive to social and cultural appropriateness. Hence, the role of the teacher should be directed toward facilitating the acquisition of language skills while exposing her students to social and cultural features of the language.

Considering the above assumption, our research questions will be as follows: (a) Does the teacher place emphasis on sociolinguistic competence? and (b) if students give sociolinguistically inappropriate responses, does the teacher provide correction? If she does, how? (c) if the teacher does not use corrections, what is the range of ways that the teacher treats inappropriate student responses? In this paper, we will examine Japanese language classroom management with a focus on the teacher's treatment of sociolinguistic errors.

Since Hymes brought the idea of "communicative competence" into language teaching, many researchers have supported the introduction of communicative competence as a goal of language teaching (Hymes, 1967, 1972 in Wolfson, 1989: 45). According to Canale and Swain (1980: 28), three components are included in the theoretical framework of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Among these three components of communicative competence, Holmes (1978:134) and Paulston emphasize the importance of sociolinguistic competence. Paulston argues, "I have come to think that it is every bit as important that we teach the appropriate forms of social usage as the linguistic forms themselves" (Paulston, 1974 in Wolfson, 1989:45).

Although many researchers have emphasized the importance of sociolinguistic competence, it is difficult to teach these cultural-linguistic norms for several reasons. First, many of the rules of speaking and the norms of interaction are both culture-specific and largely unconscious. We are not even aware of the patterned nature of our own speech behavior (Wolfson, 1989:37). Second, native speakers' perception of their speech behavior does not necessarily coincide with speech behavior which is actually observed and recorded. Also speakers' well-formed ideas about what they should say are often different from what they actually say (Wolfson, 1989:37-38). Finally, since too little research on sociolinguistic rules has been done, we are still far from a systematic description of the cultural assumptions behind speech behavior (Pica, 1990:406; and Wolfson, 1989:45). Thus, when we teach these sociolinguistic rules to language learners,

it is inevitable that we rely on our native speaker intuitions to judge what is and is not appropriate in a given situation (Wolfson, 1989:45).

In addition to general instruction, language teachers also provide learners with feedback, which includes error correction, or negative feedback, and approval of learners' production, or positive feedback (Allwright, 1975:104, Chaudron, 1988:132). With feedback, teachers can inform learners about the accuracy of both their formal target language production and their other classroom behavior and knowledge. Learners can use feedback as the powerful source of improvement in both target language development and other subject matter knowledge (Chaudron 1988:133).

Chaudron divides negative feedback into two categories. One is "modeling of the correct response," and the other is "explanation of error." Modeling usually assumes that learners can recognize the difference between the model and their error (1988:133). Chaudron describes nine components of feedback (p.144):

1. Fact of error indicated
2. Blame indicated
3. Location indicated, model provided
4. Error type indicated, model provided
5. Error type indicated
6. Remedy indicated
7. Improvement indicated
8. Praise indicated
9. Opportunity for new attempt given

Teachers should utilize these types of feedback to minimize anxiety and to reduce students' perception of corrections as failures (MacFarlane, 1975 in Chaudron, 1988:134).

There is some controversy over whether teachers should interrupt communication for error correction or leave errors untreated in order to further the communicative goals of classroom interaction (Chaudron, 1988:135). One survey on college students' attitudes toward error correction revealed that the students not only wanted to be corrected, but also that they wished to be corrected more than teachers felt it necessary (Cathcart and Olsen, 1976:45). A more recent survey by Chenoweth, et al. (1983, in Chaudron, 1988:135-136) also found that adult ESL learners had a strong preference for error correction in the context of social encounters. Error correction is especially useful to adult second language learners because it helps them to learn the exact environment in which to apply rules and to discover the precise semantic range of lexical items (Krashen and Seliger, 1975:181). Chaudron, however, states that whether learners' errors should be corrected may not depend entirely on their preferences. The decision should come primarily from evidence of the

effectiveness of error correction, a distinctly difficult phenomenon to demonstrate (Chaudron, 1988:136).

Method

Subjects

This research took place in a Japanese language classroom at the Lauder Institute. According to the course description, students met weekly for three hours during each of their four semesters at the University of Pennsylvania. The course was conducted in the target language, Japanese, and it was taught by a teacher who is a native speaker of Japanese. Class activities gave students ample opportunity to acquire and practice the language skills they will need to operate effectively in a Japanese business setting. The course was also designed to incorporate cultural content perspectives. The program included an emphasis on sociolinguistic perspectives. This can be seen in the mission statement of the program, "which is to provide future business leaders with a superior international management education and prepare them to operate effectively and comfortably in the global economy through their skills in foreign languages and their knowledge of diverse cultural environments" (Lauder Institute Brochure, 1989).

We observed one of the two Advanced Japanese classes three times. The class, with four American students, met twice per week with a seminar about a specific subject on Monday and language instruction on Wednesday. Each day had its own teacher. We planned to observe the class on Wednesday since that day appeared to provide more opportunities to see interaction between the teacher and the students. The instructor had been teaching Japanese to American undergraduate and graduate students for seven years. She was pursuing a doctorate degree in applied linguistics. The four students were Caucasian men in their late twenties, who had previously experienced Japanese culture by either having lived in Japan or by having worked with Japanese people for at least a year. Their linguistic backgrounds must have been strong because the program requires a high level of language proficiency. Their academic backgrounds were similar. Their bachelor degrees were earned in the areas of East Asian Studies/Economics, Applied Economics/Labor Relations, Political Economics, and International Political Economics. They had varied past employment experience. Some of their jobs were in the field of securities, insurance, consulting, and trade. Considering the goal of the class and students' backgrounds, it was expected that various opportunities to strengthen the students' sociolinguistic competence would be provided by the teacher in the class.

The focus of this research was to examine the emphasis the teacher placed on sociolinguistic competence. First, we intended to compare grammatical errors to

sociolinguistic errors in terms of frequency. Second, we intended to examine the teacher's treatment of sociolinguistic errors with a focus on social and cultural aspects. Thus, our research was conducted in a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Procedure

Data collection methods included the following procedure: (a) observation with field notes of three classes, (b) tape recording and transcription of the teacher's error corrections on exclusively socially inappropriate answers, and (c) interviews with the teacher about her intention of error correction and the goal of the class.

These data were collected and used to answer the research questions. Field notes on the variety of ways the teacher corrected errors allowed us to examine the extent to which the teacher emphasized sociolinguistic competence. Audio tapes and transcriptions for the three classes supported the field notes and also provided a guide to identify how the teacher notified the students of their errors. Finally, interviews with the teacher of the course assisted us in analyzing the data from a different perspective.

Data analyses was done with the following procedure:

1. Identifying students' sociolinguistic and grammatical errors. Because the two researchers were native speakers , this was done by the researchers' agreement. In order to make this procedure less arbitrary, we employed a two-fold safety gauge. First, we independently looked at all the utterances and decided if each was appropriate and explained our reasoning. Second, we compared one another's results. We used only the errors which we both believed to be socially or culturally inappropriate.

2. Examining the teacher's emphasis on sociolinguistic competence by comparing the teacher's error correction of grammatical errors to her correction of cultural errors.

3. Identifying, describing, and categorizing the teacher's manner of error correction. We used Chaudron's framework of nine types of feedback (Chaudron, 1988:144).

The classes we observed were divided into two lessons. The first lesson required students to prepare presentations to be given at the end of the semester as an examination. For this assignment, each student chose a current topic such as "gun control" or "the problem in Bosnia", and prepared a half-hour presentation. The second lesson focused on negotiation in Japanese business settings. This portion of the class was comprised mainly of the teacher's lecture. Additionally, the teacher used video tapes and magazine articles to introduce the distinctive characteristics involved in negotiating in Japanese.

Results

The teacher corrected students' grammatical errors more than their sociolinguistic errors (see Table). However, we cannot reliably say that the teacher did not emphasize sociolinguistic competence for several reasons. First, the number of sociolinguistic errors identified in the classroom was considerably smaller than the number of grammatical errors. Thus, the correction of these two sets of errors cannot be compared simply based on the absolute number of corrections. Second, in order to fully examine the teacher's emphasis on sociolinguistic competence, the manner in which the teacher treated these errors should be taken into consideration along with the number of corrections. Finally, in order to further examine the teacher's emphasis on sociolinguistic competence, we must also consider the types of learning situations which the teacher provided to enhance the students' understanding of sociolinguistic norms.

Table: Frequency of Teacher's Correction toward Grammatical Errors and Sociolinguistic Errors

	grammatical errors	teacher's correction	sociolinguistic errors	teacher's correction
numbers	60	42	9	5
ratio (%)		70		56

As described above, the teacher provided corrections for students' sociolinguistically inappropriate responses. These teacher corrections could be classified roughly into two categories, "modeling of the correct response" and "explanation of error" (Chaudron, 1988:133). The teacher treated sociolinguistic violations mainly with explanations. This was because the teacher believed that if only modeling was provided, the students would not recognize the inappropriateness of their utterances. Since the judgment of sociolinguistic appropriateness has to be based largely on native speaker intuitions (Wolfson, 1989:45), explanations are necessary for a non-native student.

To uncover the teacher's intention in correcting students' socially inappropriate responses, we categorized the teacher's manner of correction by using Allwright's (1975) framework of type of feedback (in Chaudron, 1988: 144).

No feedback

Among nine sociolinguistic errors, the teacher did not give any feedback for four of them. According to the interview with the instructor, this was due to two factors. First, the teacher did not consider these errors to be serious violations. Second, the teacher did not notice their inappropriateness (personal communication, 1994). The following are examples:

(S=student, T=teacher, O=observer)

Ex.1 S: Saikin eigo no shinbun demo yonde inai
recently English of newspaper even read not
I haven't even read an English newspaper recently.

T: .....

Ex.2 S: Kousa no sa wa chousa no sa to onaji?
inspection 's "sa" is investigation 's "sa" with same
Is [the Chinese character of] "sa" for inspection the same as "sa" for investigation?

T: .....

In these two cases, the students used the informal form in communicating with the teacher. In Japanese, formality and politeness are expressed in the ending of the sentence. In this case, *yondeinai* should be *yondeimasen*, and *onaji?* should be *onajidesuka?* However, the teacher did not regard these errors as serious violations and left them untreated.

Ex.3 S: Daitouryou to daitouryou no oksan no shita koto wa
president and president 's wife 's activity was
I think that the thing the President and his wife did was

hijouni taisetsuna kotodato omoimasuga.....
very important thing I think, but.....
very important, but.....

T: .....

Ex.4 S: Kore wa anata no sukina kotoba deshou?
this is your favorite phrase isn't it?
This is your favorite phrase, isn't it?

T: Sou?
so?
Is it?

In these two examples, there are problems with vocabulary items. In Ex.3, *okusan* is a colloquial form for wife in Japanese. In a formal presentation, *fujin* is more appropriate. Also, in Ex.4, the student used "you" to address the teacher. Since in Japanese conversation, it is appropriate to address a teacher with *sensei* which means "teacher", *anatano* (your) should be *senseino* (teacher's). However, these violations are unnoticeable unless the teacher is excessively alert to students' errors.

Model or remedy provided, fact of error indicated

Among nine sociolinguistic errors, the teacher provided models or remedies for three of them. Furthermore, before providing models for two of them, the teacher indicated the fact of error.

Ex.5 S: .....minasan wakarimasu ka
.....everyone understand question
.....Do you understand everybody?

T: "owakarininarimasu ka" no hou ga iidesu ne?
understand question the one is better isn't it?
"Do you understand?" is better, isn't it?

Although *wakarimasu* and *owakarininarimasu* are exactly the same in English, the latter is much more polite and appropriate for a formal setting in Japanese. In this case, the teacher assumed that the students could recognize the difference between the model and the student's expression, and only provided the model (personal communication, 1994).

Ex.6 After Mr. A's presentation

T: A san wa "eeto" ga ooi desu ne.
Mr. A "well" many
Mr. A, you use a lot of "well"s.

foomaruna basho dewa amari "eeto" wa
formal setting very "well"
in a formal setting

tsukawanai houga iidesu ne.
not use rather better.
it is better to avoid using "well".

Ex.7 S: (pointing at picture)
kono e wa kireidesu ne.
this picture is beautiful isn't it?
This picture is beautiful, isn't it?

T: "Kirei" ja nai desho.
beautiful not is it?
It's not "beautiful," is it?

souiu toki wa kawaii tte iundesu.
this case pretty you should say
In this case, you should say it's "pretty".

In these two cases, the teacher assumed that the students could not surmise the inappropriateness of their speech. Thus, the teacher indicated the fact of error before providing a model or remedy (personal communication, 1994).

Blame indicated

The teacher corrected errors which could lead to a serious misunderstandings, such as evoking contempt or anger in listeners, with blaming.

Ex.8 S: Purezenteishion no mae nisyuukan mo matte ite
presentation before two weeks be waiting
Since I have been waiting for two weeks before giving

wasurete shimaimashita.
forget already gone
the presentation, I have already forgotten.

T: Sore wa amari ii iiwake dewa arimasen ne.
this is not so good excuse not
It is not a good excuse.

In a formal situation, giving an excuse is taboo in Japanese culture, and if the students were to do it in a business setting, they could lose their credibility. It is assumed, therefore, the teacher used blaming to warn students.

Opportunity for new attempt given

The teacher gave students an opportunity to try again when the teacher thought the students could come up with the right answer by themselves.

EX.9 O: Tsumaranai mono desu ga kore minasan de douzo.
trivial thing though this for you all please
I'm afraid this is a trivial thing, but I brought it for you.

S: haa
Oh!
Oh!

T: hai kouiu toki wa donoyouni iimasu ka?
okay this situation how say
Okay. How would you respond in this situation?

hontouni tsumaranai mono desu ka?
really trivial thing is
Do you really think it is a trivial thing?

S: (Silence. Some students shaking heads)

T: Kouiu hyougen shitte imasu ka?
like this expression know do you
Do you know the expression like this?

"sonna koto nai to omoimasu yo kitto oishii to omoimasu."
so not think surely delicious think
"Oh, I don't think so (it is trivial.) I am sure we will enjoy it."

In Japanese culture, when people present a gift, they must describe their gift as trivial no matter how valuable it is. In contrast, the recipient of the gift must always express pleasure. Since this is a very common Japanese custom, the teacher expected students to know how to respond, and gave them an opportunity to try (personal communication, 1994).

In addition to error correction, the teacher used other methods to treat students' sociolinguistically inappropriate responses. First, the teacher introduced the norms of Japanese culture relevant to business settings by showing videotapes and magazine articles. This method was utilized to provide the students with models of socially appropriate behavior before they were asked to practice it. Second, with these study aids, the teacher introduced Japanese culture during her lectures.

Discussion

There were far fewer sociolinguistic violations in the class than we expected. This may be due to the following reasons. First, the students were accustomed to the formality of a Japanese classroom setting. Therefore, there were fewer occurrences of socially inappropriate responses. Second, since the content of the class was to give a prepared presentation, there were not many opportunities for sociolinguistic violations to occur. The presentation became their routine and the students were expected to follow the protocol in the class. We assumed there would be more sociolinguistic violations of rules in an informal setting where social and cultural knowledge are not given explicitly by the teacher. Third, as described above, the teacher began by providing information regarding Japanese

cultural norms in order to avoid occurrences of violations of protocol. Finally, since native speakers tend to have lower expectations of second language learners' sociolinguistic competence, it is difficult to identify the students' socially inappropriate responses unless they are serious violations.

The teacher corrected both grammatically and sociolinguistically inappropriate responses. Additionally, the teacher commented on students' socially inappropriate behavior, such as eating and drinking in the classroom. However, according to our observations, the teacher primarily transmitted Japanese culture by lecturing and showing videotapes rather than correcting sociolinguistic errors. According to findings in the field of second language acquisition, students can learn more when opportunities to make mistakes are provided, and these errors are treated immediately (Tomasello and Herron, 1989). Although these findings relate to learners' acquisition of grammar skills, we hypothesized that we can still apply their findings to acquiring sociolinguistic competence.

Through observation and data analysis, we found that the teacher placed emphasis on sociolinguistic competence. However, we also found that it is difficult to transmit cultural aspects of language through error corrections because it is challenging to provide students with opportunities to commit violations in a classroom, and it is difficult for teachers to identify students' socially inappropriate responses. Our findings reveal two applications for the classroom. First, as language teachers, we have to be extremely aware of cultural appropriateness when we listen to students' responses. Second, in order to convey culture through error corrections in sociolinguistic usage, we need to do further research on the effectiveness of error corrections for learning a cultural norm. If it is effective, how can we best provide students with opportunities to commit errors? We believe that for students to acquire sociolinguistic competence, they need to be given opportunities to compare their assumptions of sociolinguistic rules to the teacher corrections based on the Japanese cultural norms.

Bibliography

Allwright, R.L. (1975). Problems in the study of the language teacher's treatment of learner error. In Marina K. Burt and Heidi C. Dulay (Eds.) *New Directions in Second Language Learning, Teaching, and Bilingual Education*. Washington DC: TESOL. 96-109.

Canale, M. & M.Swain. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics:* 1. 1-47.

Cathcart, R. L. & J. E.W.B. Olsen. (1976). Teachers' and students' preferences for correction of classroom convention errors. In J.F. Farselow and R.H. Crymes (Eds.) *On TESOL 76*. Washington DC: TESOL. 41-53.

Chaudron, C. (1988). *Second Language Classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Holmes, J. (1978). Sociolinguistic competence in the classroom. In J.C. Richards (Ed.) *Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning*. Cambridge: Newbury House.

Krashen, S.D. & H.W. Seliger. (1975). The essential contributions of formal instruction in adult second language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*: 9 173-183.

Lauder Institute Brochure. (1989). Joseph H. Lauder Institute, Univ. of Pennsylvania.

Pica, T. (1990). Foreign language classrooms: making them research-ready and researchable. In B. Freed (Ed.) *Foreign Language Acquisition and the Classroom*. New York: Heath.

Tomasello, M. & Herron, C. (1989). Feedback for language transfer errors: The garden path technique. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*: 11. 385-395.

Wolfson, N. (1989). *Perspectives: Sociolinguistics and TESOL*. Cambridge: Newbury House.

Cross-cultural communication in the Writing Center and in the tutoring session: A process of sensitization

Michelle Y. Szpara

The Pennsylvania State University

The percentage of students who speak and write English as a Second Language (ESL) is steadily increasing on all college campuses. Although only 8% of the student body at the Pennsylvania State University are ESL students, 15% of the Penn State Writing Center clientele are ESL students. In the past, the Penn State peer tutor training program has only marginally addressed cross-cultural communication and has offered only general strategies for tutoring limited English proficient students. This research project explores the institutional history of serving ESL students at Penn State, surveys both tutors and ESL students, and develops materials for use in the Penn State Writing Center. The resulting materials include a unit for training new tutors and a series of staff development exercises for use with current tutors. In order to disseminate this information to a wider audience, a presentation of the research findings was given at the Ninth Annual National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing on October 23, 1992, at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and an essay has been prepared for publication on the advancements made in the Penn State Writing Center to better serve the ESL population.

Introduction to the Writing Center

The Penn State Writing Center consists of both professional and peer tutors. The professional tutors are graduate students who conduct semester-long, one-on-one tutorials with students who desire or are recommended for additional writing assistance outside of their basic English composition courses. Although this research focuses on the needs of the peer tutors, some of the educational exercises developed have been utilized in the training of professional tutors as well. Hereafter, *Writing Center* will be used to refer to peer tutors only.

The Penn State Writing Center offers free peer tutoring in writing to all Penn State students. The peer tutors are chosen from either a freshman honors composition course or a required junior-level writing course, so they represent a wide range of disciplines, from chemical engineering to English. The peer tutors complete a three-credit semester-long practicum/writing course (English 250) before coming to work for the Writing Center. They then participate in weekly staff meetings which provide ongoing training.

Students bring to the Writing Center many types of writing, including compositions for English courses, written assignments for other subjects, application letters, and texts for speeches. Writers bring in their work at all stages of the composition process, from understanding the assignment and brainstorming for ideas to making revisions and polishing the final draft. Students meet with a tutor during afternoon walk-in hours at the main center or in the evening at one of seven locations around campus. Sessions usually last thirty minutes, and the student sets the agenda for the session. The peer tutor does not do any writing on the paper; instead, the tutor uses questions and suggestions to guide the student to critically examine the writing and to decide where and how it could be improved. Through conversation with the student, the peer tutor offers non-threatening, constructive feedback in the context of being a fellow writer. The peer tutor is also knowledgeable in areas of grammar, organization, and proofreading, and offers to share this information with the writer as needed. For example, the peer tutor will not proofread a paper for the student, but will explain how to proofread and will guide the student in correcting the paper.

While the peer tutor training course, English 250, focuses mainly on the argumentative writing form, writing strategies and techniques, and the study of peer review, it also briefly addresses salient issues of tutoring in such fields as English as a Second Language (ESL), Black Vernacular English, and sexist language. Working tutors continue their examination of these issues in much greater depth during ongoing staff development meetings.

Writers for Whom English is a Second Language

ESL writers, like all writers who come to the Writing Center, represent a wide range of needs and abilities. Some need guidance only on polishing the final draft of their papers, while others have difficulty with syntax and word endings. While ESL writers are as intelligent as any other writer, they are limited in their expression of this intelligence by their unfamiliarity with standard American English. Native speakers of English are most concerned with content when they write; ESL students have to struggle with word choice and grammar, and content to produce the same results.

Why Focus on ESL Tutoring Concerns?

The University Park campus of Penn State serves approximately 3,000 ESL students as part of 35,000 graduate and undergraduate students. Since the Writing Center

believes that all writers can and should benefit from its services, the Center expected approximately 8% of peer tutor contacts to be ESL writers. Instead, over 15% of contacts have been ESL writers. Since the Writing Center operates on a walk-in policy, and the peer tutors staff a total of seven locations around campus every school night, it is not practical to have one or two ESL-specialized tutors serve the needs of all ESL students. Each of the center's twenty-five tutors needs to be comfortable with , if not adept at, tutoring ESL writers.

Another reason why the Writing Center does not offer ESL-specialized tutors on its staff is related to the institutional organization of the Penn State campus. The Writing Center is supported by the English Department and the Academic Assistance Program, and its services are available to all students on a walk-in basis. The ESL Center, on the other hand, is supported by the Speech Communications Department, and it offers ESL-oriented English composition and speech communications courses for credit. There has previously been little institutional exchange of information between the Writing Center and the ESL Center. One function of this research is to bridge this gap by educating the entire peer tutoring staff to serve all ESL writers better.

In 1989, a survey was conducted among the Penn State peer tutors to gauge their feelings toward tutoring ESL writers. The survey results indicated that the tutors generally did not enjoy and did not look forward to tutoring ESL students, and that they were very frustrated by the demands that tutoring ESL students placed upon them. These surprising results then became the incentive to initiate this research project to better understand and meet the needs of ESL writers and the needs of peer tutors in relation to these students.

The Process of Sensitization

The initial research, conducted by the author and other peer tutors[1], involved attending and participating in conferences on peer tutoring, including the Annual National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, and talking with other writing centers. The researchers contacted both centers which have had experience with ESL writers as well as those which were just beginning to address ESL issues. The researchers also consulted with local experts in the field of English as a Second Language and conducted an exhaustive search of the available literature on ESL tutoring (full bibliography provided in Szpara, 1994). Once supporting information was gathered, the process of sensitizing the Writing Center staff to the issues surrounding the tutoring of ESL writers took three main forms: (a) recognizing, understanding, and practicing cross-cultural communication (1990-

present); (b) developing resources for both the tutor and the writer and developing specific strategies in tutoring ESL writers (1990-1992); and (c) after the implementation of (a) and (b), surveying peer tutors and ESL students, analyzing the findings, and offering further training as needed (1992-present). This process, from the initial survey to the follow-up survey, took approximately four years.

Recognizing, Understanding, and Practicing Cross-cultural Communication

The recognition, understanding, and practice of cross-cultural communication has involved developing the tutors' awareness in three areas: (a) awareness of their own attitudes and values and those of the writers, (b) awareness of different culturally-based writing styles, and (c) awareness of forms of non-verbal communication in different cultures. One example of a staff development exercise on cross-cultural communication involves a discussion centered around a list comparing five insights into cultural differences (Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison of "American" Culture and Other Cultures

(adapted from "Contrastive Patterns in Non-verbal Communication Among Different Cultures")

The "American" Culture	Other Cultures
1) Personal space ranges from 18" to 24" or more.	1) In other cultures such as Puerto Rican, personal space is 0" to 18".
2) Touching strangers is discouraged in this non-contact culture.	2) In Puerto Rican and southern European cultures, touching is culturally accepted.
3) People are informed of activities with at least a week's notice.	3) In other cultures, notice of a few minutes may be sufficient time.
4) Americans like to be logical and to the point in their communication.	4) In the Japanese and Chinese cultures, it is better to talk around a point. In Vietnamese culture, certain topics (such as one's own feelings) are not discussed directly.
5) American paragraphs are developed according to inductive or deductive patterns.	5) In the Semitic languages, paragraphs are based on a series of parallel constructions. In Oriental writing, paragraphs are developed by working around the subject.

Over the course of a half hour, the discussion facilitator encourages tutors to examine how, if at all, a particular cultural difference might affect a tutoring session. The tutors also examine whether their awareness or the writer's awareness of this cultural

difference would facilitate communication during the tutoring session. In the past, tutors have found this exercise to be useful in uncovering reasons for miscommunication and misunderstandings that they have experienced in their tutoring sessions. During any discussion involving generalizations about cultural groups, such as those listed in Table 1, the tutors should recognize the danger of stereotyping writers and should consider this information as an addition to their tutoring repertoire -- a means of expanding their cultural awareness, rather than limiting it.

Developing Tutor/Writer Resources and Specific Strategies for ESL Tutoring

Based on interviews with the peer tutors and Writing Center Coordinators, the need for a concise, accessible resource manual for tutors and writers was established. Specifically, tutors wanted written materials to aid in their explanation of common ESL writing problems. The "Tutoring Handbook for Use with the ESL Writer" was then developed, which includes information on using articles (*a, an, the*), applying word order rules, and proofreading for spelling, among other topics (Table 2). The handbook is bound only by a paper fastener, so tutors can carry a copy with them during their shift, give pages to a student as needed, and replenish the pages later.

The author developed additional resources for tutors working with ESL writers, including a bibliography of resource books, strategies for facilitating the professor-student-tutor relationship, and a collection of readings for new tutors. The readings were also made available to experienced tutors for their own ongoing professional development. The readings cover a wide range of topics from Robert Kaplan's (1984) "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education" to Ann Raimes' (1991) "Errors: Windows into the Mind." The author also developed a collection of exercises to foster cross-cultural communication skills. These exercises include the exploration of cultural "uniquenesses," exercises for learning about different cultural writing styles, a discussion of problems in tutoring ESL writers, and interactive skits to elicit and explore feelings toward ESL students and ESL tutoring. Several of the staff development exercises were selected for adaptation and implementation in the English 250 training course held every spring semester.

Table 2: Table of Contents, "The Tutoring Handbook for Use with the ESL Writer"

I. Tips for Tutoring ESL Writers
II. Common Grammar and Usage Trouble Spots for ESL Writers
- Articles--*A, An, The*
- Comma
- Two Comma Punctuation
- Semi-colons
- Punctuation (,;:__“”)
- Proofreading
- Spelling Rules
- Irregular Verbs
- Subject/Verb Agreement
- Run-ons
- "If" Statements
- Word Order

III. Writing the Introduction and Conclusion
- Sample Introductions
- Sample Conclusions

IV. Self-Evaluation Checksheet
V. Indexes to Writing Tutors' Files
- Index to the Writing Tutors' Exercise File
- Index to the Writing Tutors' General Information Files

Surveying Peer Tutors and ESL Students

After staff development exercises, discussions, and a review of ESL tutoring tips, tutors were asked to record their reactions to individual ESL tutoring sessions (see Appendix 1). Tutors' responses in this follow-up survey were much more positive than those in the initial survey four years earlier. However, they continued to express concern over problems common to ESL tutoring, such as how to explain correct article usage and how to develop the writer's proofreading ability.

In addition, ESL writers who utilize the Writing Center's services were asked to complete a survey designed to elicit (a) their needs with respect to English writing, (b) their evaluation of the Writing Center services, and (c) a self-assessment of their writing ability (see Appendix 2). Overall, the ESL writers indicated satisfaction with the services of the Writing Center tutors and a desire for expanded access to those services.

Both sets of surveys also suggested a number of areas in which additional study is necessary and in which more resources need to be developed. The author is currently exploring the particular needs of African ESL writers and hopes to create beneficial exercises to develop tutors' cultural sensitivity in this area.

Conclusion

It is the author's hope that this collection of educational staff development programs and tutor/writer resources will offer a foundation upon which to build. Those interested in sharing information are encouraged to correspond with the author via electronic mail (MXS119@dolphin.upenn.edu) or at the following address: 250 Kathleen Drive, Peckville, Pennsylvania, 18452-1715. In this way, tutors who have begun to sensitize themselves to the needs of ESL writers will be able to continue this process as new information surfaces and better ways of serving ESL writers are discovered.

---

[1] The author gratefully acknowledges the many contributions of the Penn State Peer Tutors in Writing, the Writing Center Coordinators, and the Writing Center Director, Dr. Ron Maxwell.

Bibliography

Alatis, J.E. & Staczek, J.J. (Eds.). (1985). *Perspectives on bilingualism and bilingual education*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Bowen, J.D., Madsen, H. & Hilferty, A. (1985). *TESOL: Techniques and procedures*. Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers of Harper & Row.

Burt, M.K. & Kiparsky, C. (1972). *The gooficon: A repair manual for English*. Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Contrastive patterns in non-verbal communication among different cultures. Handout from The Pennsylvania State University Basic Skills Conference, May 1991.

Hakuta, K. (1986). *Mirror of language: The debate on bilingualism*. U.S.: Harper Collins.

Johnson, D.M. & Roen, D.H. (Eds.). (1989). *Richness in writing: Empowering ESL students*. New York: Longman.

Kaplan, R. (1984). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. In S. McKay (Ed.), *Composing in a second language* (pp. 43-62). Massachusetts: Newbury House.

McKay, S. (Ed.). (1984) *Composing in a second language*. Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Olson, G.A. (Ed.). (1984). *Writing Centers: Theory and administration*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.

Omaggio, A.C. (1986). *Teaching language in context: Proficiency-oriented instruction*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle.

Paulston, K.B. & Bruder, M.N. (1976). *Teaching English as a second language: Techniques and procedures*. Massachusetts: Winthrop.

Raimes, A. (1991). Errors: Windows into the mind. *College ESL*, 1 (2): 55-64.

Szpara, M. (1993). Cross-cultural communication in the Writing Center and in the tutoring session: A process of sensitization. Unpublished University Scholars Thesis, The Pennsylvania State University.

Vaid, J. (Ed.). (1986). *Language processing in bilinguals: Psycholinguistic and neuropsychological perspectives*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Appendix 1: Tutor's Form for ESL Tutoring Evaluation

Tutor's Name _____
Date _____
Time In/Out _____
Location of Tutoring Session _____

1) How, if at all, did your tutoring in this session differ from your work with writers who speak English as their native language?

"I try to ask questions about the student's background...it helps me to show respect for their culture..."
"ESL writers seem to be "better" writers -- more in command of their thoughts..."

2) Are there any resources (i.e.--additions to the ESL Handbook, further training, etc.) that would be helpful to you in ESL tutoring?

"a book of American idioms"
"information on African culture, relational style, and writing style"

3) Any other thoughts, comments, or questions?

"Articles and tenses are general problems."
"Perhaps it always has to be this step-by-step process for people learning another language."

Note: A sampling of tutors' responses are given in italics.

Appendix 2: Writing Center - ESL Tutoring Evaluation

Please take a few minutes to answer these questions. Your comments will help us learn how to serve you better. Thank you!

1) Tutor's Name _____

2) Date _____
Time In/Out _____
Location of Tutoring Session _____

3) What is your native language? _____
Do you speak any other languages in addition to English and your native language? Which ones?

4) Have you used the Writing Center before? Yes No

5) What kind of help or feedback did you want to get from this tutoring session?

"correcting grammar error"
"idioms, natural expressions, and pronunciation"
"sentence structure"
"to improve my paper"

6) When the session was over, what else, if anything, did you wish the tutor had focused on?

7) What do you feel is the most difficult part of writing in English?

most common answers: "grammar", "lack of vocabulary", and "short and clear or simple sentences"

8) How would you rate your English writing ability? You can rate it on a scale of 1 (Low) to 5 (High), and/or make a comment.

1 2 3 4 5

9) What suggestions do you have for improving the Writing Center services for ESL writers?

"ESL-specialized tutors"
"more time with tutors"

Please feel free to make additional comments or continue any response on the back of this sheet or a separate piece of paper. Thank you for your help!

Note: A sampling of tutors' responses for questions #5, 7, and 9 are given in italics.